



Presentation

Use *if* + past perfect to talk about situations that did not happen in the past. The situation described is often the opposite of what really happened. Use *would have* + past participle to talk about the hypothetical past consequences of the imagined past situation:

imagined past situation	imagined past result
<i>if</i> + past perfect <i>If the driver hadn't seen the dog in time,</i>	<i>would have</i> + past participle <i>he'd have hit it.</i>

Note: this is often referred to as the third conditional.

The contracted form for both *had* and *would* is '*d*:
If I'd told you, you'd have told the police.

Don't confuse the two forms. *Had* is followed by a past participle: *If I'd told you, ... = If I had told you, ...*

Would is followed by *have* + past participle: *You'd have told the police. = You would have told the police.*

would have, could have, might have

Use *would have* to describe the logical consequence of a hypothetical situation: *He would definitely have hit the dog (if he hadn't seen it in time).*

Use *could have* or *might have* to speculate on one of two or more possible consequences of a hypothetical past situation: *If the driver hadn't stopped in time, it could/might have got killed! (= This is one possible hypothetical consequence.)*

TIP You can use *couldn't have* to talk about a lack of ability in the past. In this case you cannot use *might have*, nor can you use an *if* clause: *The driver couldn't have reacted any quicker.* (= it was physically impossible)

Real or imaginary?

When you want to talk about a real past situation, use *if* + past simple:

If you knew the dog wasn't on the lead, why didn't you warn the driver?

If you knew = you did know.

Compare it with a sentence using *if* + past perfect:

If I'd known the dog wasn't on the lead, I would have warned the driver.

If I'd known = I didn't know.

You often use *if* + a real past situation to express criticism of a past action.

should have, ought to have

Use *should have* and *ought to have* to talk about the correct or morally right thing to do in a past situation. You often use these forms to criticise past actions:

If they couldn't control the dog, it shouldn't (or ought not to) have been off the lead.

If you knew the dog was loose, you ought to have (or should have) warned the driver.

1 Choose the correct options.

- 1 If I'd *arrive / arrived* on time, I'd *have / had* spoken to him before he left.
- 2 If my phone *hadn't / wouldn't have* run out of battery, I'd *called / have called* you.
- 3 I *hadn't arrived / wouldn't have arrived* late if my car *hadn't / wouldn't have* broken down.
- 4 They'd never *found out / have found out*, if he *hadn't / wouldn't have* said something.
- 5 I think we *could have / had* won, if we'd *try / tried* harder.
- 6 If you'd really *want / wanted* to come, you'd *found / have found* a way.

2 Complete the sentences about the imagined past situations.

- 1 The teacher was very angry with him because he hadn't done his homework.
The teacher wouldn't have been so angry with him if he had done his homework.
- 2 I was very tired this morning because I went to bed late last night.
If I late last night, I so tired this morning.
- 3 You didn't tell me it was her birthday, so I didn't bring her a present.
If you her birthday, I a present for her.
- 4 I passed the exam because you helped me.
I the exam if you me.
- 5 I didn't see you, so I didn't say hello.
I hello if you.
- 6 I didn't miss my train because it was delayed.
If the train on time, I it.

3 Complete the sentences using the verbs in the boxes.

might have would have should have

- 1 That was a very silly thing to do! You really been more careful.
- 2 If I'd paid more attention, I learnt something new.
- 3 If she'd won the competition, she been the first woman to do so.

could have shouldn't have wouldn't have

- 4 If you'd paid more attention, you got lost.
- 5 If you didn't know what you were doing, you been on the boat!
- 6 That was very irresponsible. Someone got hurt.

4 Write the correct form of the verbs in brackets. Then listen and check.

A: You missed a good concert last night. You really should have been there.
B: But I was!

A: If you ¹ (be) there, why ² (I/not/see) you?
B: I was in the gallery. If you ³ (look) up, you ⁴ (see) me. I waved at you, but you didn't wave back.

A: If I ⁵ (not wave) back, it ⁶ (be) because I couldn't see you! Why didn't you text me or something? If you ⁷ (send) a text, we ⁸ (go) out for a drink or something.

B: I tried, but I didn't have any credit on my phone. And anyway, I had to go home early.